

27 November 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Information Services

FROM: Chief, Classification Review Division

SUBJECT: Procedural Policies Proposed for use
in the Historical Review Program

1. By an exchange of letters with Senator Dave Durenberger in October 1983, the Director agreed to establish a selective declassification review program of Agency material of interest to historians. The objection was to identify material of greatest interest to historians and sufficiently declassifiable so that meaningful and useful portions could be released. Approval is now requested on the following policies which will govern the establishment of the Historical Review Program:

a. Only non-designated and de-designated files will be considered for the program. Generally speaking, only permanent records will be considered for the program but exceptions may be made for temporary records of particular importance or significance to historians.

b. The selection process will concentrate on older material, first 30 years and then 20 years old, but this does not exclude the possibility of considering more recent material where special interest is present, e.g., Vietnam.

c. The Chief, DCI History Staff, after consulting with CIA components, historical officers of other government agencies, the Archivist of the United States and others, will determine what topics are of the greatest interest and importance.

d. Each directorate will determine which of its files contain information responsive to the topics selected by the historians, determine whether the files are suitable for the program on general security grounds, and whether a meaningful and useful portion can be declassified for release. The Chief, DCI History Staff, and DA/OIS/CRD personnel are available to assist the directorates in this process.

e. Each directorate will have final authority to decide which of their files will be offered to the program.

f. The systematic declassification review of the selected files will be done by DA/OIS/CRD. That review will be conducted under Executive Order 12356 to protect all information classified on national security grounds. They will coordinate the review within the Agency, principally with the responsible directorate, and with other U.S. government agencies as necessary.

g. Only minor and incidental sanitizing, that which will leave the substance of a document intact, will be undertaken on individual documents during the review process.

h. When a document is declassifiable according to this program, a copy of it will be made and the original file copy will be left in the file, but marked to indicate that a copy had been made for the Historical Review Program.

i. When a document cannot be declassified for the program, a notation will be placed in the new file that a document was withheld. There is no way to prevent FOIA requests for such withdrawn documents but we could ask NARS to attempt to deflect such requests on the basis that the classification of the document was so recently reviewed. Obviously this argument will lose strength with the passage of time. Another argument is that FOIA and mandatory requests would slow down the systematic Historical Review Program.

j. Each directorate will be the final authority to decide whether particular material will be released and the form in which it is released.

k. When the declassification review and coordination have been completed, the releasable portion of the files will be offered to NARS by DA/OIS/IRMD working jointly with the directorate. NARS will be responsible for making the material available to the public and for protecting privileged information such as that covered by the Privacy Act, copyrights, etc. (NOTE: We should get an informal opinion from NARS whether or not they will accept these records under these conditions!)

l. A computerized record of the Historical Review Program will be made using either an existing system such as DARE or DECAL, or a separate system that more completely meets the need.